

Barth Society will meet in San Antonio November 19-20, 2004

Our meeting in Atlanta will feature a Friday afternoon session from 4:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. and a Saturday morning session from 9:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The presenters for the Friday afternoon session will be **George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary**, who will speak on the subject of “**Barth on Christ’s Resurrection and Eternal Life**” and **Bryan Wagoner, Harvard University**, who will speak on the subject of “**Revelation as Event in Barth’s Early Theology**”. This session is listed as **AM19-108** in the AAR program and will be held in **MRC – Salon I**. The **Saturday morning** session will be held in **MRW – Salon C** and is listed in the AAR program as **AM20-19** and will feature a panel discussion of **Eberhard Busch’s** new book, *Karl Barth & the Pietists: The Young Karl Barth’s Critique of Pietism & Its Response*, Foreword **Donald W. Dayton**, trans. **Daniël W. Bloesch**, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2004) led by **Donald W. Dayton, Azusa Pacific University**.

The following item supplied by Professor **George Hunsinger** of **Princeton Theological Seminary** was a front page article published in the *New York Times* on May 2, 1962.

Barth is Shocked By Prisons in U.S.

Swiss Theologian Says Visit to Jail Here Was Like a View of ‘Dante’s Hell’

By **George Dugan**

The Rev. Dr. Karl Barth, the Swiss Protestant theologian, stepped out of character briefly yesterday and voiced a fervent plea for prison reform in this country.

Dr. Barth made the appeal at a press conference held under the joint auspices of Princeton Theological Seminary and Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., publisher.

The theologian, who is delivering a series of lectures at the seminary, made a quick trip to New York for the conference. He was interviewed at the offices of the publishing concern, 383 Madison Avenue between Forty-sixth and Forty-seventh Streets.

Dr. Barth explained that he often visited prisons in Switzerland as a sort of extra-curricular ministry and had asked to see one here. He did not mention where he was taken as a visitor.

‘Cages’ Shock Him

The 75-year-old theologian said that he had been “terribly shocked” to see human beings incarcerated in “cages” instead of cells and that it was like viewing

“Dante’s hell.” He was particularly disturbed that the two inmates in a “cage” had no privacy.

Dr. Barth said he was dismayed that religious forces of the United States had been silent on prison conditions and said that, in his opinion, the billions of dollars being spent on moon shots might be better expended on the welfare of prisoners.

“The jails in Switzerland are a paradise to what I saw here,” he commented.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel A. Poling editor of *Christian Herald* magazine, interposed that “perhaps you saw one of the worst of our prisons.” He added that such dismal conditions were not typical of the newer prisons in this country.

Dr. Barth volunteered his comments on the prison situation after answering other questions ranging from nuclear testing to Mozart, his favorite composer.

Decries Nuclear Tests

On the resumption of nuclear tests he said: “It’s terrible. I don’t like them whether they are Russian or American.”

Reminded that the Rev. Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, another eminent Protestant theologian, once described Barthian theology as irrelevant and irresponsible, the Swiss churchman grinned and said:

“I don’t like to speak about it. He was my old friend who doesn’t like me anymore. I don’t teach irresponsibility. I try to teach man’s responsibility to God.”

Dr. Barth said he was not competent to discuss the forthcoming Vatican Council of the Roman Catholic Church because he was neither the Pope nor a “prophet.”

Members' News and Information

Mark R. Lindsay, Director of Academic Studies, Trinity College, Fellow, Department of History, University of Melbourne and author of *Covenanted Solidarity: The Theological Basis of Karl Barth's Opposition to Nazi Antisemitism and the Holocaust* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001), has written a chapter on Barth in the new *Blackwell Companion to Modern Theology*. Professor Lindsay is also working on *Barth, Israel, and Jesus: Karl Barth's theology of Israel* to be published by Ashgate.

David Demson, of Emmanuel College, gave a course of thirteen lectures entitled "An Introduction to the Theology of Karl Barth" to M.A. students in the Faculty of Theology of the University of Latvia in Riga. He also conducted a seminar for doctoral students on Luther's "Thesis (with their Proofs) for the Heidelberg Disputation, 1518."

Congratulations to **Bruce L. McCormack**, of Princeton Theological Seminary, who received an honorary doctorate from the Theological Faculty of the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität in Jena, Germany on May 25, 2004. McCormack was honored for "his foundational works in the theology of Karl Barth and for furthering scientific cooperation between American and German theology."

Congratulations and Best Wishes to **Iain R. Torrance**, Editor of the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, and formerly Professor of Ethics and Patristics as well as Dean of Faculty at the University of Aberdeen, on his appointment as **President of Princeton Theological Seminary** as of July 1, 2004.

The 2004 **Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers' Karl Barth Session for Pastor-Theologians** met on June 28-29 in Chestnut Hill. Led by **William Klempa** of the Presbyterian Church of Canada two sessions considered how Barth's trinitarian theology might shed light on issues related to Congregationalists.

New Books on Barth

For the Sake of the World: Karl Barth and the Future of Ecclesial Theology, ed. **George**

Hunsinger (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2004). Here thirteen of Karl Barth's most astute interpreters explore in fresh ways a variety of themes from Barth's life and work, showing how Barth still has much to offer the contemporary world. Contributors include: Eberhard Busch, John D. Godsey, Clifford Green, John W. Hart, David Hollenbach, S.J., George Hunsinger, Brian Leftow, Daniel L. Migliore, Caroline Schröder, Caroline J. Simon, Katherine Sonderegger, John Webster and Randall C. Zachman.

Dogmatics Among the Ruins: German Expressionism and the Enlightenment as Contexts for Karl Barth's Theological Development by **Ian R. Boyd** (New York: Peter Lang, 2004). This book explores Barth's relationship to German Expressionism and the Enlightenment with a view toward seeing how Barth's thinking took shape in relation to these contexts.

The Great Passion: An Introduction to Karl Barth's Theology by **Eberhard Busch**, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, eds. Darrell L. Guder and Judith J. Guder is expected to be published late in October, 2004 by William B. Eerdmans. Eberhard Busch is a world-renowned expert on Barth's theology who served as Barth's last personal assistant. In this book Busch weaves doctrine and biography into a superb presentation of Barth's thought.

Karl Barth's Theological Exegesis: The Hermeneutical Principles of the Römerbrief Period by **Richard E. Burnett** (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004). Burnett provides the first detailed look at this watershed event, showing how Barth read the Bible before and after his break with liberalism, how he came to read the Bible differently than most of his contemporaries, and why Barth's contribution is still significant today.

ASHGATE ANNOUNCES its Barth Studies Series with its Series Editors:

John Webster, Aberdeen, UK, **George Hunsinger**, Princeton Seminary, USA and **Hans-Anton Drewes**, Karl Barth Archive, Basel, Switzerland.

The following books are available:

Barth on the Descent into Hell: God, Atonement and the Christian Life by **David Lauber**, **Wheaton College**. In addition to bringing Barth's interpretation of atonement into conversation with Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday, Lauber offers a constructive proposal for how the descent into hell affects the theological interpretation of Scripture, the trinitarian being and activity of God, and the non-violent and authentic shape of Christian life and witness before our enemies.

The Ascension in Karl Barth by **Andrew Burgess**, **All Saints Anglican Church, New Zealand** presents the doctrine of the ascension as an important and undervalued doctrine and encourages Christians to see how, like Barth, they might benefit in their ability to think coherently about the present age and about Jesus in relation to this age, enabling further thought about the work of the Holy Spirit, the church and Christian ethics.

Ecclesial Mediation in Karl Barth by **John Yocum**, **Greyfriars Hall, Oxford, UK** contends that Barth's late rejection of the concept of sacrament is not only at odds with his account of the nature and importance of sacraments presented earlier in the *Church Dogmatics* but subverts important elements of his theology as a whole. In dialogue with Congar, Yocum develops his own proposal.

FORTHCOMING:

Conversing with Barth edited by **John C. McDowell** and **Mike Higton** is expected to be published in November, 2004 and will contain contributions from Nicholas Lash, John Webster, Timothy Corrigan, Graham Ward, George Hunsinger, Ben Quash, Mike Higton, John McDowell, Eugene Rogers, Katherine Sonderegger, David Cough and David Ford.

Ethics in Crisis: Interpreting Barth's Ethics by **David Clough**, **St. John's College, Durham, UK** argues that Barth's ethical thought remained defined by the theology of crisis that he set out in his 1922 commentary on Romans, and that his ethics must therefore be understood dialectically so that it will point a way beyond the idolatry of

ethical absolutism and the apostasy of ethical postmodernism (October, 2005).

Karl Barth's Christological Ecclesiology by **Kimlyn J. Bender**, **University of Sioux Falls** seeks to offer the first comprehensive exploration of Barth's doctrine of the church in over three decades by presenting Barth's ecclesiology which developed in interaction with Roman Catholicism and Protestant Liberalism (April, 2005).

Karl Barth's Modernity: The Paradox of the Self by **Mark Ralls**, **United Methodist Church, USA** argues that Barth preserves the modernist claim that the self has a self-identity established by free self-determination, while the self is also established anew as the covenant partner of God. It is hoped that this view of the self could avoid both the false optimism of modern subjectivity and the daunting cynicism of postmodern deconstruction (February, 2006).

Karl Barth: Theologian of Christian Witness by **Joseph L. Mangina** is expected to be published by Ashgate in their **Great Theologians Series** in November, 2004. This book offers a concise accessible guide to Karl Barth and his theology. Unique among introductions to Barth, it also highlights his significance for Christian ecumenism.

OTHER NEWS

The T. F. Torrance Fellowship will meet from 7 to 8:30 P.M. on Friday, November 19, 2004 at the San Antonio Marriott River-walk Hotel in the Bonham Room.

This year's speaker will be **Paul D. Molnar** of **St. John's University** in New York. He is the Editor of the Peter Lang Series, **Issues in Systematic Theology**, the author of *Divine Freedom and the Doctrine of the Immanent Trinity: In Dialogue with Karl Barth and Contemporary Theology* (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2002) and has just published an article entitled "Love of God and Love of Neighbor in the Theology of Karl Rahner and Karl Barth" in **Modern Theology**, October,

2004. Professor Molnar will present a paper entitled "Natural Theology Revisited: A Comparison of T. F. Torrance and Karl Barth." **Elmer M. Colyer**, who is Professor of Historical Theology at the **University of Dubuque Theological Seminary** and author of *How To Read T. F. Torrance: Understanding His Trinitarian and Scientific Theology* (Downer's Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2001), will offer a response followed by discussion.

Anyone interested in becoming a member of the **T. F. Torrance Fellowship** is encouraged to contact the President, Gary Deddo, gdeddo@ivpress.com.

Church Folks for a Better America

is a project of the Coalition for Peace Action, Princeton, New Jersey coordinated by Dr. George Hunsinger, Princeton Theological Seminary: "We are Christians from different communions and citizens who span the political spectrum. We grieve that our nation is not standing for 'liberty and justice for all,' nor treating Iraqis as we would be treated. We believe that accountability begins at home, that wise leaders know their mistakes, and that honest leaders admit them. Fear and resentment will never guide us to a just and lasting peace. Any nation that hopes to be 'under God' must live for a positive vision of world community, not a blind response to terrorism that tragically makes others see us as if we were terrorists ourselves."

For more information visit our website at <http://www.cfba.info>. To contribute by check, make check payable to: PAEF/Dove AD, 40 Witherspoon St., Princeton, N.J. 08542.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE KARL BARTH SOCIETY

Dear Friends,

I have been involved with the Karl Barth Society of North America ever since 1977, when I first spoke at a Barth Conference in Toronto. The KBSNA has always been blessed by members who have been able to host and organize conferences. These events, which have

reached out to pastors, students and professors, have been the life-blood of our organization.

The leadership of our society has now passed to a new generation. We can no longer rely upon those venerable members who went before us. The future of the society is in our hands.

If we are to continue to hold worthwhile events, one thing is obviously needed: enough money to pay for our expenses. The KBSNA has always been remarkably casual about fund-raising. We would like to hold a Barth conference in late May or early June 2005. That will depend on finding a suitable location and on having the necessary funds.

We are working on finding a location. And there is a way to obtain the money we need.

If only everyone who receives this Newsletter, now in the capable hands of Paul Molnar, would pay the modest yearly dues, we could move forward toward our goal.

Please write a check today. Let us exercise responsible stewardship worthy of the legacy we have received.

George Hunsinger, President
Karl Barth Society of North America

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ANNUAL BARTH SOCIETY DUES

Everyone interested in joining the Karl Barth Society of North America is invited to become a member by sending your name, address and annual dues of \$15.00 (\$10.00 for students) to:

Professor Paul D. Molnar
Division of Humanities
—Bent Hall
St. John's University
8000 Utopia Parkway
Queens, New York 11439
Email: molnarp@stjohns.edu

Checks drawn on a U.S. bank should be made payable to the Karl Barth Society of North America.

Dues for membership in the Barth Society run from January 1 through December 31.